

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, US, SF, GB

SUBJECT: BONGOS PARIS PRESS CONFERENCE

1. ACCORDING TO "L'UNION" SEPT 9, PRESIDENT BONGO ON HIS ARRIVAL IN PARIS SEPT 8 RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS POSED BY PRESS. ASKED ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING TRIP TO AFRICA, BONGO IS QUOTED AS REPLYING: "MR KISSINGER WISHES TO GAIN TIME. HIS TRIP TO AFRICA IS USELESS." COMMENTING ON THE RECENT MEETINGS BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, BONGO DECLARED: "IT IS A WASTE OF TIME. THE DIALOGUE WILL COME TO NOTHING. MR VORSTER WILL NOT CHANGE HIS POLITICS AS HE IS A RACIST THROUGH AND THROUGH AND WILL REMAIN ONE. FOR US AFRICANS, THESE CONVERSATIONS ONLY CONSOLIDATE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND SOUTH AFRICA." THE GABONESE PRESIDENT ESTIMATED THAT "THE ONLY WAY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH AFRICA WAS FOR THE AFRICANS TO TAKE UP ARMS AS IN ANGOLA."

2. COMMENT: BONGOS REMARKS PROBABLY TARGETED FOR FRENCH AUDIENCE, AND ALSO MAY HAVE BEEN GIVEN A MORE ANTI-AMERICAN CAST BY FRENCH REPORTING THAN HE INTENDED.
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BONGON DOES HAVE HABIT OF SHOOTING FROM HIP DURING IMPROMPTU

PRESS CNFERENCES, BU ON OTHER HAND HAS NO HESITATION
ABOUT REVERSING ILL CONSIDERED POSITIONS OR HASTILY
MADE REMARKS. EMBASSY BELIEVES BONGO IS ACTUALLY MORE
SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS SECRETARYS EFSLDTS FOR NEGOTIATED
SOLUTION TO RHODESIAN SITUATION THAN LOCAL ACCOUNT
OF PRESS CONFERENCE WOULD INDICATE.

3. FOR PARIS: WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS ON REPORTING
OF PRESS CONFERENCE IN PARIS PRESS. STEIGMAN

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